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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 25th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MUNTASSER (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 107: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued) (A/46/6/Rev.1, A/46/7)

AGENDA ITEM 108: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/46/16 and Add.1)

First reading (continued)

Section 22. International drug control

1. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the 4.9 per cent growth rate was entirely due to the conversion of four non-recurrent posts, a category that had been eliminated in the proposed programme budget, to established posts. He recalled that, in late 1990, 20 new posts had been authorized under section 22.

2. He further recalled that, in its resolution 45/179, the General Assembly had asked the Secretary-General to create an integrated United Nations International Drug Control Programme and to submit a report on measures taken in that regard to the Assembly at its forty-sixth session. Two reports had been prepared by the Secretariat: one, the main report on the implementation of the resolution (A/46/480), was currently under consideration by the Third Committee; the other, on administrative and financial arrangements for the Programme (A/C.5/46/23), was being reviewed by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ). He hoped that the Fifth Committee could proceed with its first reading of section 22 without waiting for the Third Committee and the Advisory Committee to complete their work on the topic.

3. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that ACABQ recommended approval of the Secretary-General's request for the conversion of four temporary posts to established posts. As stated in paragraph 22.6 of its report (A/46/7), it believed that, in view of the large increase in staffing resources under section 22, it should be possible to scale down the request for $539,700 to pay for consultants. It trusted that the use of new technologies would enhance the Programme's productivity. He would introduce the report of ACABQ on administrative and financial arrangements for the Programme in the context of the Committee's consideration of the report of the Secretary-General on the administrative and financial arrangements for the Programme (A/C.5/46/23).

4. Ms. BERENGUER (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination) said that CPC had approved the programme narrative of section 22 with one change: the addition under subprogramme 6 of a fourth priority area concerning ways and means of increasing access to opiates for legitimate medical purposes.

5. Miss MONTAÑO (Bolivia) said that her delegation was pleased to note the priority given by the Secretariat to international drug control, as evidenced by the proposed real growth rate of 4.9 per cent for that section. It wished to stress the urgency of intensifying efforts to improve the system for monitoring and controlling narcotic drugs, implementing the Global Programme of Action adopted by the General Assembly at its seventeenth special session and enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations structure for drug abuse control in accordance with resolution 45/179. It was important to ensure that the Programme had sufficient resources to fulfil its mandate. To that end, the Programme's budget should be constantly monitored until it could be determined that the resources allocated were sufficient to allow it to carry out all its programmed activities. In that respect, her country attached particular importance to projects aimed at substituting the cultivation of other lucrative crops for that of narcotic plants and financing other activities that would allow developing countries to generate equivalent revenue.

6. While regular budget resources had been distributed evenly among the eight subprogrammes in section 22, the distribution of extrabudgetary resources created an imbalance in the levels of financial support. In that light, her delegation wished to stress the need to broaden the resource base for substantive activities and operational programmes. Moreover, the format of the proposed programme budget should be improved to make it easier to assess the real growth of budgetary resources, extrabudgetary resources and the combined total of both. Finally, in order to correct the distortions in programme implementation created by the current distribution of extrabudgetary resources, ways should be found to achieve greater flexibility in allocating extrabudgetary funds.

7. Her delegation reserved the right to comment on the report of the Secretary-General on administrative and financial arrangements (A/C.5/46/23) when it was discussed in the Committee.

8. Mr. COHEN (United States of America) wished to express his appreciation to the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme for their efforts to enhance the effectiveness of the Organization's drug control activities during the course of 1991. Expenditures under section 22 represented less than 0.6 per cent of the total budget requested for the biennium. Given the importance of the Programme, he did not consider the proposed 4.9 per cent real growth rate excessive.

9. As further measures to enhance the Programme's capacity were currently under review, his delegation would comment on those proposals at the appropriate time. For the present, it wished only to express its belief that the Programme should be given additional regular budget posts through the redeployment of staff currently assigned to other programmes and departments in the Secretariat.

10. Mr. CLAVIJO (Colombia) said that, like Bolivia, his country attached considerable importance to the distribution of funds in such a way as to ensure compliance with the overall orientation of the Programme. That concern was adequately reflected in the report of CPC (A/46/16). However, he wished to add that, since the Programme was dependent on extrabudgetary funding for 80 per cent of its resources, donor countries should be required to make general contributions that were not tied to any specific activities.

11. Mr. ZARI-ZARRE (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his country, as a country in a transit region for East-West drug trafficking, attached great importance to international drug control and had intensified its costly campaign against drug trafficking. The Secretary-General had received a strong mandate in General Assembly resolutions 45/146, 45/147 and 45/148 to reinforce the drug control activities of the Organization. While the Secretariat had made international drug control one of the main priorities in its budget proposals and had provided for considerable growth, he was concerned about the heavy reliance on extrabudgetary resources.

12. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the 12 States members of the European Community, said that, as the Third Committee had not yet finished its deliberations on the proposals regarding the structure of the Programme, and as the Twelve wished to study the Advisory Committee's report on administrative and financial arrangements, they would like to revert to section 22 at a later stage.

13. Mr. RAE (India) said that, as a victim of transit trafficking, his country attached high priority to section 22, which was in fact one of the five broad priority areas identified by the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session. He was happy to note that, in keeping with that emphasis, considerable growth was proposed for the international drug control programme and its extrabudgetary funding was projected to increase by almost 30 per cent. Given the very considerable resources expected from voluntary contributions, he did not understand the reason for increasing the number of posts funded from the regular budget and decreasing those funded from extrabudgetary resources, as indicated in the proposed programme budget. In addition, he could not accept the justification given for the proposed conversion of four non-recurrent posts to established posts. If those posts had originally been funded on a non-recurrent basis to assist the secretariat in honouring its treaty obligations and in carrying out follow-up activities to the 1987 International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, as indicated in paragraph 22.18 of the proposed programme budget, he assumed that the activities in question had been temporary. If there were new activities that would justify funding the posts on a permanent basis, they should be identified in the proposal.

14. As the largest producer of opiates for legitimate medical purposes, India attached great importance to increasing access to them for such use, as mandated by General Assembly resolution S-17/2 and Economic and Social Council resolution E/1990/31. He would like precise indications from the Secretariat as to the financial and personnel resources allocated to those activities

(Mr. Rae, India)

within the United Nations system. His delegation also reserved the right to address the issues dealt with in document A/C.5/46/23 at a later date.

15. Mr. GREGG (Australia) said that his country attached high priority to international drug control and, in broad terms, agreed with the staffing and resource levels proposed. However, like the States members of the European Community, it believed that a final decision on section 22 should be deferred until a number of issues, such as those dealt with in document A/C.5/46/23, could be addressed.

16. Ms. ERKISSON FOGH (Sweden) said that her delegation, too, wished to revert to section 22 at a later date.

17. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) said that some of the issues dealt with under section 22 exceeded the competence of the Third Committee. It might therefore be a good idea to look at better ways of approaching the topic of international drug control rather than wait for the Third Committee to finish its deliberations. If the Fifth Committee did decide to wait, it might very well run out of time. He pointed out that any decision taken at the current meeting could be revised in the light of further consultations.

18. Turning to budgetary matters, he said that, at its forty-fifth session, the General Assembly had approved the net addition of 20 new international drug control posts in the revised estimates for the biennium 1990-1991. Now the proposed budget for the biennium 1992-1993 called for a real growth rate of 4.9 per cent under the section. With the consolidation of the various supposedly separate drug entities, his delegation had expected greater efficiency and economy. Although he was aware that international drug control was one of the five priority sectors, at some point it would be necessary to decide when the Programme was large enough.

19. There was considerable difference of opinion among delegations concerning reliance on extrabudgetary resources. In resolving that issue, the Committee should be guided by established practice and the provisions of Article 17 of the Charter, which stated that the expenses of the Organization should be borne by the Members as apportioned by the General Assembly. He agreed with the representative of Colombia with regard to extrabudgetary resources; if excessive reliance on such resources were to continue out of necessity, it would be essential to develop ideas for increasing general-purpose contributions.

20. Ms. BEAULIEU (Canada) said that her delegation supported the restructuring process but would reserve its comments on the subject until more details were available.

21. Mr. PANOV (Bulgaria) said that, in view of the great importance of the subject, the Committee should postpone taking a decision until the results of the Third Committee's deliberations were available.

22. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) said that it would be dangerous for the Committee to defer taking decisions simply because other Committees were considering action. He did not see how its work could progress if that procedure were adopted. His delegation supported the generous proposed real growth of 4.9 per cent under section 22. It also agreed on the need for a balance of regular budget and extrabudgetary resources.

23. Finally, he wished to know how the Committee was to handle the proposals in the report of the Secretary-General on administrative and financial arrangements regarding the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (A/C.5/46/23) and when it would be able to discuss the Advisory Committee's conclusions and recommendations thereon. His delegation supported the activities under the Programme but shared the concern expressed by the representative of India about the proposed conversion of temporary posts into established posts. It would not, however, oppose the proposals.

24. Mr. DANKWA (Ghana) said that his delegation endorsed the programme narrative and estimates for section 22 and supported the Advisory Committee's recommendations. It would have been prepared to endorse a rate of real growth greater than 4.9 per cent and the provision of a larger than 30 per cent increase in extrabudgetary resources.

25. On procedural matters, his delegation was prepared to discuss the report of the Secretary-General in document A/C.5/46/23, but not to await the Advisory Committee's comments on it before taking action on section 22. Under the current budget process, estimates were approved without taking account of the programme budget implications of decisions adopted at the current session. The Committee should therefore reach a provisional decision on section 22 and take account of any financial implications during informal consultations.

26. Mr. GREGG (Australia) said that he had not intended, in his earlier statement, to suggest deferring a decision on section 22, as had been done in the case of sections 2 and 6. However, if the comments awaited from the Advisory Committee were of direct relevance to the Committee's decision, they should not be treated informally.

27. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee had begun its consideration of the report of the Secretary-General on administrative and financial arrangements (A/C.5/46/23) only the previous day. He could not yet say when it would reach conclusions, or what those conclusions would be, after it had considered that report and the related report of the Secretary-General on measures taken to implement resolution 45/179 (A/46/480). The Advisory Committee would be continuing its consideration of both reports and of any conclusions reached by the Third Committee, and he would keep the Fifth Committee informed of developments. The Advisory Committee's report on its consideration of document A/C.5/46/23 would have to be a formal written report because it concerned administrative and financial arrangements pursuant to the

financial and personnel regulations of the United Nations. The Fifth Committee could not therefore deal with it in informal consultations.

28. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), replying to the issues raised, said that the proposal to convert non-recurrent temporary posts into established posts was an attempt to introduce greater transparency into the budget proposals by suppressing a concept the main advantages of which were that the posts did not appear in staffing tables and were not included in the growth rate calculations. As far as section 22 was concerned, the concept no longer existed and the proposals indicated that the posts created on that basis were in fact necessary for the Programme. He would try to present more evidence to that effect during the informal consultations. The proposed conversion had no financial implications because the posts in question had been costed in the current programme budget, even though they did not appear in the staffing table. There would thus be no additional charge on the regular budget.

29. In reply to points made by the representative of India, he said that the apparent decline in the number of extrabudgetary posts indicated by table 22.4 did not reflect the true picture because, as the footnote to that table stated, it excluded many posts financed under an arrangement with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The actual situation with respect to extrabudgetary posts under the Programme was still not clear. With regard to the question about the provision of financial resources and posts in connection with the licit production of drugs, he would provide an answer at a later date. In conclusion, he assured the Committee that the Secretariat had taken note of all the points raised in the discussion.

30. The CHAIRMAN requested the Committee, in a spirit of flexibility, to take the usual action on section 22, to continue discussions in informal consultations, and to hold informal and formal meetings as necessary to discuss the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/C.5/46/23 and the Advisory Committee's comments thereon.

31. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) said that the comments by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee implied that a formal meeting would be necessary. If the course suggested by the Chairman included such a meeting, his delegation would not oppose it.

32. Ms. ROTHEISER (Austria) said that she had deferred making her delegation's comments on section 22 until it had a complete picture of the situation, including the Advisory Committee's comments on document A/C.5/46/23. She therefore supported the Chairman's suggested course of action and reserved her delegation's right to comment on the proposals under section 22 at a later date.

33. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that no irreparable harm would be done if the Committee agreed to the Chairman's suggestion, because the report of the Secretary-General in document A/C.5/46/23 made no proposals requiring additional staff or funds. It might be that the Third Committee, when it concluded its consideration of the report of the Secretary-General in document A/46/480, would make recommendations which did require additional posts and funds. If so, they would be considered in the usual way as proposals related to a decision of the Third Committee in the context of a statement of programme budget implications submitted by the Secretary-General. If, therefore, the Fifth Committee took a provisional decision on section 22, the discussion would be resumed at a formal meeting of the Committee in the context of the Advisory Committee's report on document A/C.5/46/23 and any recommendations made by the Third Committee.

34. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) said that he was satisfied with the comments made by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee and hoped that he was right in stating that the proposals in document A/C.5/46/23 would not require additional resources. However, the proposed conversion of the post of Executive Director of the Programme from a temporary to an established post related to the broader question of the comprehensive restructuring of the United Nations entities in Vienna and to the General Assembly's request to the Secretary-General to identify four high-level posts for abolition. The Fifth Committee had to consider not only the International Drug Control Programme, but also the broader issue of the restructuring of the Vienna services, and he believed that they should be tackled together.

35. Mr. RAE (India) endorsed the Chairman's suggestion as to how the Committee should proceed. He would pursue the questions that he had asked earlier about the provision of adequate resources for the licit production of drugs and about the conversion of posts during the informal consultations.

36. Mr. DANKWA (Ghana) said that, in his view, the Committee should confine its attention to section 22. The report of the Secretary-General in document A/C.5/46/23 was not part of the proposed programme budget and its implications should be considered in a different context.

37. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the conclusions and recommendations of CPC on section 22, as contained in paragraphs 301 and 302 of its report (A/46/16).

38. It was so decided.

39. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee for an appropriation in the amount of $13,632,300 under section 22 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 was approved in first reading, on the understanding that the issues raised in connection with section 22 would be considered in informal consultations and any necessary adjustments made.

40. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda), explaining his delegation's position, said that it was his understanding that the decision which had just been taken did not embrace the proposals submitted in document A/C.5/46/23, to which he would revert during informal consultations.

Section 23. Economic Commission for Africa

41. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the proportion of funding for the Pan-African Documentation and Information System (PADIS) that was to be met by UNDP was guaranteed for the biennium 1992-1993. With regard to the non-recurrent provision of $850,000 for four posts at the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) (A/46/6/Rev.1, para. 23.16), UNDP was providing funding for projects rather than making a contribution to the general funding of the Institute. With respect to the provision for the training of language staff at ECA (para. 23.99), the relevant report of the Secretary-General would shortly be submitted to the Advisory Committee for its consideration, as would the report on the question of a temporary post at ECA for evaluation. Lastly, with regard to the African Regional Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, should the Third Committee adopt a resolution with programme budget implications, the matter would, of course, come before the Fifth Committee.

42. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the general reductions recommended by the Advisory Committee had not been applied to the regional commissions, with the exception of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). The Advisory Committee had been mindful of the large balances remaining under those sections, which were largely attributable to the vacancy situation at the regional commissions. In response to concerns expressed by the Advisory Committee and the Fifth Committee, the Secretariat had taken action to reduce the vacancy rates. Although rates at some commissions still exceeded 5 per cent, the rate applied in the preparation of staff costs for the regular budget, further action to reduce them was already in hand. With regard to the reduction in the appropriations proposed in respect of ECE, the Fifth Committee would note that ECE made use of various services provided by the United Nations Office at Geneva, for example, conference servicing and administrative and general services.

43. In its report on the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Advisory Committee noted that the ECA staffing table should indicate the number of extrabudgetary posts funded by other United Nations agencies (A/46/7, para. 23.6). With regard to the multinational programming and operational centres (MULPOCs), the various review bodies had concluded that they should be further strengthened. The Advisory Committee was of the view that care should be taken to identify their programmes of work clearly in order to avoid any appearance of duplication with ECA headquarters. Specifically, the role of the secretariat of ECA and MULPOCs in programme formulation and implementation should be further clarified (A/46/7, para. 23.11).

(Mr. Mselle)

44. The Advisory Committee concurred in the reclassification of the post of the Chief of the Transport Operation Section from P-4 to P-5, and accepted the proposal for the establishment of a P-4 post of editor and a P-3 post of system analyst at ECA. The Advisory Committee would shortly consider the question of the training programme for language staff.

45. Ms. BERENGUER (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination) noted that activities under section 23 fell within the five priorities identified by the General Assembly. Paragraphs 304 to 314 of the report of CPC should be read in conjunction with paragraphs 432 to 439, on the development issues and policies programme at ECA. In that section of its report, CPC had reiterated the continued validity of the MULPOCs and had noted that persistent inadequacies of financial and human resources had adversely affected their ability to discharge their functions, and had recommended that the General Assembly should fully reflect the recommendations of the Evaluation Report concerning the provision of resources. CPC had, in particular, indicated the need to strengthen the functioning of the MULPOCs (A/46/16, para. 310).

46. CPC had stressed the necessity of ensuring the predictability, adequacy and timeliness of extrabudgetary resources for ECA, and noted with regret the proposals to redeploy resources away from social sectors; appropriate measures should be taken to ensure that there was no adverse impact on programme delivery in that sector. For that reason, the Secretary-General should take measures to strengthen the evaluation function at ECA. She noted that the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1991/82, had appealed for the funding of additional posts in the MULPOCs and for the provision of adequate financial resources for ECA.

47. Mr. ELDEEB (Egypt) said that ECA was an important component of the United Nations system, having become the focal point for the concerns of Member States with regard to Africa. The relevance of those concerns had been reflected in the medium-term plan, in support of which the necessary funding for section 23 (ECA) must be provided under the regular budget since extrabudgetary resources could not be guaranteed. Accordingly, his delegation welcomed the Advisory Committee's recommendations in respect of section 23. The estimate of $67,089,800 was the minimum needed for the implementation of ECA programmes and his delegation would make every effort to promote a consensus on the section within the Committee.

48. Mr. ONWUALIA (Nigeria) said that section 23 was extremely important. The modest rate of real growth of 2.7 per cent did not reflect the priority accorded to the development of Africa by the General Assembly. It was clear from table 23.1 in the proposed programme budget that the resource situation was not good; for example, the biggest contributor, UNDP, had reduced its contribution from $19.2 million for the biennium 1990-1991 to $17.9 million for the biennium 1992-1993. Many priority areas, including the environment and human settlements, had not been well provided for. The Commission's

(Mr. Onwualia, Nigeria)

reliance on extrabudgetary resources was particularly disquieting. His delegation fully endorsed the CPC recommendation that the requisite resources should be provided to the MULPOCs. All posts at the MULPOCs should be filled. It was also important to provide funding for the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), and his delegation awaited with interest the report on the revival of a training programme for language staff at ECA.

49. The Commission's programmes must be improved. His delegation was surprised that the proposal for an evaluation section at ECA had apparently not been taken seriously, and would revert to the matter in the informal consultations to be held on section 23. Lastly, he appealed to the Secretary-General to release all funds approved for ECA under the regular budget before the appropriations lapsed at the end of the year.

50. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the 12 States members of the European Community, said that he wished to make a general statement concerning sections 23 to 27 of the proposed programme budget. The Twelve appreciated that much of the work done by the regional commissions was highly valued by Member States and wished to stress the need for increased coordination between the commissions and the relevant international organizations, in particular the specialized agencies of the United Nations, so as to avoid duplication of work. The activities and resources of the regional commissions were significant in relation to those of the substantive programmes of the central secretariat and it was therefore important that they should make an effective contribution to economic and social development, taking into account the recent evaluation in international relations.

51. The Twelve were aware that requirements varied from region to region and that the circumstances in which each of the commissions operated could be very different. They would consider carefully the remarks made by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee with regard to the application of the general reductions recommended by ACABQ and believed that the issues involved merited further review in the course of informal consultations.

52. Mr. COHEN (United States of America) said that ECA should play an important role in the economic and social development of Africa. His delegation did not believe, however, that the programme structure and work programmes in the proposed programme budget would make significant contributions in that regard and did not agree with other delegations that a substantial increase in resources for ECA would improve the situation. Without major changes in the orientation of the work programme in section 23, as in other sections, increases in regular budget expenditures would have little, if any, impact. It would be recalled that the recommendations of the Group of 18, which had been approved by consensus in General Assembly resolution 41/213, included a number of proposals to improve United Nations economic and social programmes.

(Mr. Cohen, United States)

53. Regarding the number of extrabudgetary posts available to the Commission, paragraph 23.6 of the Advisory Committee's report suggested that not all the extrabudgetary staff were reflected in the staffing table. His delegation would appreciate information on the total number of ECA posts financed from voluntary resources. The Advisory Committee likewise noted that not all of the posts provided to the MULPOCs had been reflected in the budget document. His delegation assumed from the information provided in paragraph 23.9 of the ACABQ report that the total staffing of the MULPOCs was 81 posts and not 53 posts as shown in table 23.11 of the Secretary-General's submission. It supported the Advisory Committee's position that future budget submissions should identify more clearly all resources available to the MULPOCs from both regular budget and extrabudgetary sources.

54. His delegation had serious reservations regarding the proposed subvention to the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP). It did not believe that the Organization's regular budget should be used for such purposes and was particularly troubled by the reference in paragraph 23.8 of the ACABQ report to tripartite consultations on the future financing of IDEP. Information regarding the status of those consultations would be appreciated. His delegation trusted that any decision reached on the matter that could affect the regular budget would be subject to approval by the General Assembly. Member States should not be expected to finance the costs of IDEP through assessed contributions if they had not had an opportunity to participate in the discussions.

55. His delegation was also concerned by the decision of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) to withdraw its support and staff from operational projects for industrial development. Given the priority which should be accorded to that issue, it hoped that UNIDO would reconsider its position.

56. Lastly, his delegation would appreciate clarification from the Secretariat concerning the impact of the revival of the training programme for translators/précis-writers, for which over $700,000 had been allocated for the biennium 1992-1993, and on the budgetary requirements for temporary assistance to service meetings of ECA during the same biennium. At the forty-fifth session, several delegations had indicated that the training programme would provide ECA with permanent staff, thus obviating the need for the provision of temporary assistance from Geneva.

57. Mr. NKOUNKOU (Congo) expressed support for the conclusions and recommendations of CPC (A/46/16, paras. 310-314). His delegation, too, was concerned by the decision of UNIDO to withdraw its support and staff from operational projects for industrial development and would welcome clarification from the Secretariat as to the status of those projects which were expected to continue into the coming biennium.

58. Mr. NEGGA (Ethiopia) agreed with the comments made by the representatives of Egypt, Nigeria and the Congo and recalled the importance attached to regional cooperation for development in Africa in the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997. In that context, the 2.7 per cent rate of real growth calculated for section 23 did not fully correspond to the requirements of ECA for the implementation of the programme of work outlined in the Secretary-General's submission.

59. With regard to the MULPOCs, his delegation endorsed the recommendation in paragraph 310 of the CPC report (A/46/16), which stressed the need to strengthen the functioning of the centres to enable them to carry out their mandate effectively. The requisite resources should be provided for that purpose. His delegation also noted the estimated requirements for staff training. In that connection, it supported the revival of a training programme for translators/précis-writers in all the official languages of ECA.

60. The modest rate of real growth projected could, in his delegation's view, have an adverse impact on some important subprogrammes, such as social development, the advancement of women, industrial development and natural resources. Those issues, like many others, needed greater attention than ever before in the context of the critical situation in Africa. The Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division might wish to explain the reasons for the proposed resource allocation in respect of those activities.

61. Mr. MONTHE (Cameroon) said that, in examining sections 23 to 27 of the proposed programme budget, the Fifth Committee would have to consider how far the Secretary-General's proposals would enable the regional commissions to serve as focal points for development. In doing so, it needed to bear in mind the circumstances in which they operated and the status of the resources available to them.

62. With regard specifically to section 23, the situation of ECA, in terms of both regular budget and extrabudgetary resources, appeared to be very precarious. How effectively the $67 million regular budget provision could be used would depend largely on the ability of the Controller and the Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division to overcome the cash flow problems of the past. By the end of the coming biennium, the Committee might well discover that only about $40 million had actually been utilized. The $39.5 million extrabudgetary resources included amounts from UNDP and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) that would both be reduced significantly from the 1990-1991 estimated expenditures, and, given the UNFPA trend towards independence, ECA might well find itself almost literally on shifting sands.

63. The rate of real growth was calculated at 2.7 per cent. To decide whether that was adequate, the Committee had to consider the programme implications. In that regard, the tables in paragraphs 23.5 and 23.6 of the budget document were of limited help in indicating the estimated percentage distribution of resources; they revealed a gap between regular budget and

(Mr. Monthe, Cameroon)

extrabudgetary funding and confirmed the need for more resources to be devoted to the programme of work. CPC had repeatedly expressed the view that the programme structure of ECA had to be revised and he wondered how many of the 21 subprogrammes listed could really be implemented to good effect.

64. With regard to personnel questions, the decline in the vacancy rate was encouraging but the issue of enhancing staff morale still had to be addressed through incentives based on proper management and mobility. In the area of technological innovations, the automation project had been fully implemented and it was to be hoped that the 300 personal computers installed would increase productivity. Staffing for the MULPOCs was not complete, however, the Secretariat having provided less than the minimum number of posts required on the ground that redeployment was needed at ECA. With regard to the Pan-African Documentation and Information System (PADIS), funding was insecure in view of the decision taken by UNDP. The African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), furthermore, was being treated like a poor relation and the idea of a subvention and regular budget funding needed to be considered. With regard to evaluation and language training, he was pleased that reports would be issued shortly by the Secretariat.

65. In conclusion, while noting the plans for rebuilding at ECA outlined in section 35, on which he would comment at the appropriate time, he wished to stress the need for total rehabilitation instead of a piecemeal approach to the improvement of the Commission's functioning. ECA required a sound financial basis; its growth prospects had to be assured and the spirits of its staff lifted if it was to serve as a genuine focal point for economic and social development in Africa.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.